

Remarks

Status of Claims

Claims 2 and 4-12 are now in this application.

Claim 2 has been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) for lack of novelty over Wheeler (US2004/0002337).

Claims 2 and 8 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) for lack of novelty over Bharatia (US6,763,233).

Claims 4 to 7 and 9 to 12 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Bharatia in view of Chang (US6,487,406).

Date of Present Application including its claims

The present application has a priority date of 22nd October 1999. The priority application EP99308340.1 was filed at the European Patent Office on October 22, 1999. A PCT application PCT/EP00/05705, publication No. WO 01/31859 designating the US was filed on May 20, 2000. The PCT application claimed priority of the earlier filed EPO application EP99308340.1. The present US application is derived from this PCT application. It is believed that the USPTO would have received a copy of the priority document via the International Bureau (WIPO). If the Examiner however wishes us to provide a further copy of the priority application for his ease of reference, we would be happy to obtain and forward this.

Wheeler

As indicated on the front page of Wheeler, Wheeler is derived from a US provisional application having a date of 17th May 2000.

Accordingly, the cited document Wheeler has an earliest effective date (17th May 2000) which is later than the effective date (22nd October 1999) of claim 2 of the present application. It follows that Wheeler is not citable against claim 2. Accordingly the rejection over Wheeler falls away.

Bharatia

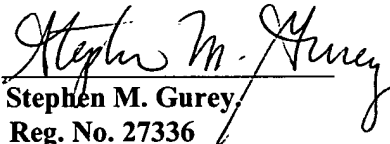
As indicated on the front page of Bharatia, Bharatia is derived from a US provisional application having a date of 5th January 2000.

Accordingly, Bharatia has an earliest effective date (5th January 2000) which is later than the effective date (22nd October 1999) of claims 2, 4 to 7, 8, and 9 to 12 of the present application. It follows that Bharatia is not citable against those claims. Accordingly the rejections over Bharatia, and the rejections over Bharatia in view of Chang, fall away.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, allowance of all the claims presently in the application is respectfully requested, as is passage to issuance of the application. If the Examiner should feel that the application is not yet in a condition for allowance and that a telephone interview would be useful, he is invited to contact Applicants' attorney, **Jimmy Goo**, at **973 386-6377**.

Respectfully,
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